

Capítulo 15

DE LOS PECES DE MAYOR MAGNITUD QUE HAY POR ACÁ, Y SUS DIFERENCIAS Y PROPIEDADES

No haré aquí mención de las ballenas que acá llaman *bongansiso*¹, que, aunque son grandes, no empero tanto comúnmente como las del océano de nuestra España, ni de los ballenatos, que llaman *tandaiag*² estos naturales, si bien tal vez en los grandes mares de Ibabao se ven, y han visto, peces de formidable grandeza que, por ser tanto, llegan raras veces a las costas, así por ser las de Ibabao costas bravas (aún cuando el mar más en leche) y sus tumbos como grandes bóvedas, en especial cuando está el mar en cierto género de bonanza a que llaman “mares bovas” los marineros, y estos naturales *dolog*³, pues, sin haber viento, hay unas olas grandísimas, efecto de las borrascas pasadas o vientos recios venideros que, aunque muchas veces no llega lo recio del temporal a las costas, sino muy lejos de ellas, llegan empero las olas que con la comunicación o impulsos sucesivos del dilatado mar (que quizás es este el mayor golfo del universo), que hay desde aquí a Nueva España, vienen empolladas y grandísimas.

Diré lo que de estas olas “bovas” he experimentado algunas veces navegando por las costas de Ibabao dichas, que son la primera tierra, o isla grande, que desde Acapulco acá se encuentra (que aunque están cerca las islas de los Ladrones que dije, son tan pequeñas que no le sirven de impedimento alguno a las olas).

Son, pues, tan grandes estas olas que, navegando desde Borongan⁴ (de que ya hemos hecho alguna mención, y haremos después) hacia Sulat⁵, otro pueblo de la costa, más hacia el norte, al pasar por una punta muy grande y que sale mucho el mar afuera, llamada de estos naturales *Gintagitan*⁶ (que quiere decir que “está como amarrada,” y

Chapter 15

CONCERNING THE LARGER FISH THAT ARE HERE AND THEIR DIFFERENCES AND QUALITIES

I shall not make any mention here about the whales, which they call *bungansisu*¹ over here. They are large but not as big as those in the oceans about Spain. Not do I speak about the little whales which the natives call *tandayag*,² although they are seen occasionally in the great seas of *Ibabaw*. Fish of formidable size have been seen but they rarely come in to the coasts both because the shores of *Ibabaw* are rough (even when the sea is calm) and its waves like great vaults. This is especially when the sea is in a certain state of calmness, which the sailors call '*mares bovas*' and these natives *duluk*.³ Without there being any kind, there are a number of huge waves resulting from past storms or violent winds that are coming. Even though the severe weather does not reach the coasts but stays a great distance away from them, nonetheless the waves arrive. With their connected and successive impulses from the vast sea (perhaps this is the greatest expanse of sea in the universe) which extends from here to New Spain, they come fully formed and really large.

I shall describe what I have experienced at times sailing along these waves '*bovas*' of *Ibabaw*, which are the first lands, or the large island, that is connected from Acapulco here (although the islands of the *Ladrones* are near, as I said, they are so small that they do not serve as any hindrance whatever to the waves).

These waves are so great that on sailing from *Borongan*⁴ (about which we have already made some mention and will do so again) towards *Sulat*,⁵ another town of the coast farther north [there] one passes by a very large point of land where the sea courses far out beyond it, called by these natives *gintagitan*,⁶ which means to say, 'as if bound to

así de al continente y grueso de la dicha isla), y de otra isleta que estará poco más de un tiro de mosquete de dicha punta, suelen ser las olas, que allí revientan en la dicha punta a isleta, tan grandes que no se ven ni una ni otra, con estar tan cerca, por impedirlo lo levantado de las olas que, por no reventar en el medio, se pasan con menos peligro, y más de dos veces, estando en la popa de la embarcación, pero, como se va llegando, la va levantando, sin otro desmán mayor que un desmedido columpio que más de dos veces me ha suspendido a mi la respiración; tan apacibles son como esto, por acá, los mares.

En estos mares, pues, por los años de 1633 dio a la costa un pez de formidable grandeza, pues, según me contaban los indios, el de 1634 que yo llegué al dicho pueblo de Borongan, había varado en más de seis brazas de hondo, y era, según decían, mayor que ningún galeón de cuantos van en esta carrera, con ser algunos muy grandes.

De su carne comieron muchos meses, que duró sin pudrirse totalmente, e hicieron *tapa*⁷ (que es asarla y secarla al fuego) hasta que se pudrió, y era tanto entonces el hedor, según oí a muchos, que se percibía de muy lejos, y, cuando tenía el viento en su favor, lejísimos de donde había varado.

Vi yo algo de los dientes, que eran durísimos y como marfil, aunque el color no tan blanco. No puedo decir su grandeza, porque no los vide enteros sino a pedazos que iban cortando con hachas, y algunos de ellos eran bastantes para hacer empuñaduras de sus *cris*, que así llaman a un género de dagas que entre ellos es espada y daga, que, para labrarlos y disponerlos, habían de ser tan gruesos como el puño, y vez y media más largos. Pues, buen tamaño habían de tener los dientes que se sacaban en tan grandes trozos. Lo demás de los huesos, como las costillas, que eran grandísimas, aunque menos sólidos, éranlo empero mucho más que los de las vacas, y como los de los *duyones*⁸, de que hablaremos luego.

No supieron los indios qué género de pez era, que nunca tal habían visto en sus costas, y así debió de ser alguno de los desmedidos monstruos que en este extendidísimo océano del Sur tiene Dios encerrados por grandeza, como allá los peces menores se suelen tener en los estanques de los parques o jardines para entretenimiento de los hombres.

it' and thus overlooks the mainland and the chief part of that island). From another islet, which would be a little farther than a musket shot from this point, one can see waves which continually break on that point and the islet so large that neither one is visible even when very close, because the height of the waves prevents it. Because they do not break in the middle, one can pass with little danger. More than once standing in the stern of the vessel, I could see a wave coming many times higher than the ship, but as it approached it raised the ship without any greater mishap than an interminable rocking which more than once has caused me to loose my breath. This is how placid the seas are over here!

About the year 1633 there was thrown up from these seas a fish of an incredible size. According to what the natives told me in 1634, when I arrived at this town of Borongan, it had been grounded in water more than six *brazas* deep. It was, they said, larger than any galleon of the size that travel on this course, and some are very large.

They ate its flesh for the many months that it lasted without completely putrefying; they made *tapa*⁷ (which is to cook it and dry it in the fire) until it rotted. So great was the stench then, according to what I heard from many that it could be noted from a great distance and when it had a favorable wind, a tremendous distance from where it had been beached.

I saw some of its teeth which were extremely hard and like marble, although the color was not as white. I cannot speak about their size because I did not see them whole, but only pieces. They were cutting them with hatchets and some of them were large enough to make hilts for their *kris*, as they call a kind of dagger which among them is a sword and dagger. In order to fashion and shape the hilts they had to be as large as the point and one and half as long. The teeth must have been a great size to have produced such large pieces. The rest of the bones, like the ribs which were huge, although not so hard, were nevertheless much harder than those of cows and like those of the *duyung*⁸ about which we shall speak next.

The natives did not know what kind of fish it was and they had never seen anything like it on their coasts. Hence, it was regarded as one of the gigantic monsters which God had confined in this vast ocean of the south because of its size; just as over there, smaller fish are kept in ponds in the parks or gardens for the amusement of people.

Pero, llegando ya a lo especial de los peces, por allá incógnitos y aquí de más estima y provecho, digamos lo tocante al pez que llaman acá los naturales *duyong*, que con varios nombres bien diferentes les nombran en otras partes, y en las de la India o mares de Malaca, donde se hallan también, los llaman los portugueses *pese mullier*⁹, nombre que le ha dado no la figura humana de hombre o mujer a que imita (como dicen algunos autores que escriben de él, porque no lo han visto, pues de mil leguas no tiene que ver con ella) ni tampoco el sexo femenino, pues son ambos dos sexos de macho y hembra (como en todos los animales) bien notorios en ellos (he visto muchos y mandado coger no pocos, y así hablaré de noticias y experiencias oculares y de anatomías que de él he hecho) sino porque crían a sus pechos y traen abrazados a sus hijuelos (uno solo es el que paren) cuando chicuelos y que por su flaqueza no pueden seguir a su madre. Es, pues, su figura y tamaño el que se sigue.

El mayor que yo he visto, y dudo que llegue otro alguno a excederle, porque era muy viejo, según se colige de los colmillos, de que trataremos después, tendría dos brazas y media de largo desde el hocico hasta el remate de la cola. Lo grueso del cuerpo mayor que de ningún otro de los mayores de por acá, e igual a los de España; el color ceniciento obscuro, la tez lúcida y lisa, excepto que suele tener algunos pelos, aunque raros, pero mayores que cerdas; la cabeza es muy fina y grande, los ojos pequeños y hundidos; orejas no las tiene, agujeros sí, dos que son los oídos; la frente ancha y rolliza, porque en medio es muy gruesa; su nariz y boca muy grande como de un leonazo; tiene pelos como los gatos, cerca de los labios y nariz, de color blanco, pero como cuatro o cinco cerdas juntas su tamaño; tiene lengua como de buey, pero añade a los labios hocico muy duro y redondo que le sirve de escarbar y revolver las ovas, o hiervas, que come solamente, paciendo como buey en las peñas y playas donde las hay a su propósito, y a estos comederos espían los pescadores para irlos a aguardar allí cerca.

No tienen más que dos alones como dos brazos, pero sin manos, aunque tienen su codo; y, en lugar de dedos y palmas, tienen dos paletillas delgadas y flexibles que es con lo que nadan, yendo la cola como los atunes, aunque la parte superior es mucho más larga y más ancha que la inferior. Llámánla los indios *bugsanga*¹⁰, y es el mejor bocado, según ellos dicen, y el más sabroso de toda su carne.

But, coming now to the peculiar kinds of fish that are unknown over there, and here are greatly esteemed and useful. We shall speak about the fish which the natives here call *duyung*. It is known under various and quite different names in other places. In the regions of India or the seas of Malacca, where it is also found, the Portuguese call them '*pese mullier*'.⁹ This name was given because of the human figure, either man or woman, which it resembles (as some authors say who write about it, because they have not seen it, for in a thousand leagues of ocean one may not see it) nor because of its feminine sex either for both sexes, male and female (as in all animals) are quite obvious among them (I have not seen many and had a few of them caught. Hence, I speak from the knowledge and experience of my sight, and from the dissections which I have made of them). Rather, (the name was given) because they nurse their young at the breast and carry them clasped to them. They give birth only one at a time when very small and when through weakness they cannot follow their mother. Their shape and size, then, is as follows.

The largest one that I have seen, and I doubt that any other would exceed it because it was very old, as may be gathered from the tusks, which we shall discuss afterwards. It was about two and half *brazas* in length from the snout to the end of the tail. The girth of the body was greater than any bull of the largest variety here, and equal to those in Spain. It was dark ashen in color. The surface of the body was shining and smooth, except that it had some hair although thinner than that of the hog. The head is very ugly and large; the eyes small and sunken. It does not have ears, but rather cavities for hearing. The forehead is wide and rounded because in the middle its nose is very thick. The mouth is very large, like a great lion. It has hairs like a cat about its lips and nose; it is of a white color, but in size like four or five bristles put together. It has a tongue like an ox, but in addition to the lips there is a very tough round snout which it uses to root and stir up the eggs or weeds which is all that it eats; going about like an ox over the rocks and sands where they are to its liking. The fishermen lurk near these feeding grounds in order to await them close by.

They do not have more than two wings, like two arms but without hands, although they do have an elbow. In place of fingers and palms they have two thin flexible little paddles which is the means they swim. The tail ends like that of the '*paletillas delgadas*', although the upper part is very much longer and wider than the lower. The natives call them *bugsanga*¹⁰ and it is an excellent morsel, so they say; the most savory of all their flesh.

Tiene cerca de los sobacos dos pechos o tetas que imitan a las de las mujeres. De algunas he exprimido yo con mis manos la leche, que no se diferencia en el color y olor de las de las vacas; y, a mi ver, a ningún animal o pez se semeja más que este a las vacas, quitados los pies y el cuello, que el *duyon* no lo tiene, sino que lo más grande y grueso de su cuerpo es la cabeza excepto la barriga, que es como de una vaca, hasta en su figura exterior, y es tal que cuando el *duyon* es pequeño y de una braza de largo, parece un hombre amortajado, sin quitar ni poner, excepto que es mayor la cabeza, porque la cola imita a los pies, los dos brazos a los humanos, y, el acabar en punta, le hace asemejar más a lo dicho.

Y es tanta verdad esta que, habiéndome traído uno del tamaño dicho, mandé llamar a un español que se hallaba en el pueblo (y no había visto aún *duyones*, y me dijo que si cogiesen alguno que se lo mostrase) y, al verlo algo de lejos, se alteró y retiró, pensando que era burla, porque entendió era un hombre amortajado. Aseguréle que no. Llegamos, y, aun viéndolo de cerca (no se atrevió a tocarlo) le parecía serlo, y no hubo remedio que comiese de él (siendo la carne de estos pequeños más regalada y mucho mejor que la de los grandes) por la impresión que le quedó con su vista, teniéndolo por hombre amortajado, y el color no lo desmentía porque son más blancos cuando pequeños.

Vengamos ahora a su anatomía y composición interior, que es ésta: la barriga y su interior es como la de una vaca; los intestinos como los de ellas; su hígado y bofes, corazón, riñones y redaños tales que, vistos fuera, nadie diría que son de pez. El pellejo es muy grueso; tendrá un dedo de ancho lo más delgado. La carne se semeja en su color y hebras a la de las vacas, y, cuando pequeñas, a una regalada ternera. La sangre de la misma manera, aunque esta de los *duyones* es de mejor calidad, de modo que algunas veces dándolo a comer (hácense de ese pescado todos los guisados que de vaca y ternera) en viernes o vigiliass a los que no saben lo que es, reparan, y he visto yo alguno de los nuestros no quererlo comer, por no parecerles posible que aquello fuese pescado sino vaca o puerco. Tanto como esto se les parece.

Ya dije que el mejor bocado (a juicio de los indios) es la cola; pero, a mi ver, lo es la carne de la papada que imita a la de un cebón de los

Near the armpits it has two breasts or teats which resemble those of women; with my own hands I pressed the milk from some of them and it does not differ in color or odor from that of cows. In my opinion no animal more closely resembles cows than this; we leave out the feet and the neck which the *duyung* does not have. However, the largest and thickest part of the body is the head except for the belly which is like that of a cow, even in outward shape. It is such that, when the *duyung* is small and about a *braza* in length, it seems like a human corpse without any difference except that the head is larger, because the tail resembles the legs; the two arms look human and ending to a point makes it resemble a man even more.

There is so much truth in this that having brought one of this size along with me, I ordered that a Spaniard be summoned who was living in the town (and who had not yet seen *duyung* and had told me that if they should ever catch one I should show it to him). On seeing it at some distance away he turned and went back thinking that it was a joke because he believed that it was a human corpse. I assured him that it was not, when we arrived, and even on seeing it at close range (he did not venture to touch it) it seemed to be so. He could not be prevailed upon to eat it (the flesh of these small ones being more valued and much better than that of the large ones) because of the impression that he had gained from its appearance by which he regarded it as a dead man, and the color did not lessen the deception because (these animals are whiter when they are small).

We come now to their anatomy and their inner composition which is this: the stomach and its interior is like that of a cow; the intestines are also similar. The liver, lungs, heart, kidneys and caul — when seen separately — no one would say that they come from a fish. The skin is very thick and about a finger at its thinnest portion. The flesh is similar in its color and fibers to that of a cow and when small it resembles the young offspring. The blood is of the same composition although that of the *duyung* is of a better quality. In fact when it is served — we make from this fish all the dishes that are cooked from beef and veal — on Fridays or vigils to those who do not know what it is, they refuse to eat it. I have seen some of ours who would not eat it because it did not seem possible to them that it was fish, but rather more like that of a cow or a pig. So much did it resemble these.

I have already stated that the best portion, (in the judgment of the natives), is the tail; however, for me, it is the flesh of the neck which

más gordos y bien cebados. La manteca no es como la de vaca o puerco, sino más sólida, y esta está junto al pellejo, de modo que esto es lo más gordo, y, aunque tiene sus empellas dentro, no las diferencian los indios de la otra carne.

De cuántas arrobas de carne tendrá, curiosidad es que se me pasó, que pudiera haberlo hecho pesar muchas veces. Sólo digo lo que experimenté en uno de estos, que de sola la cola, cortada desde el albañar común hasta su extremidad, y hecha pedazos para salarla, como se saló, se llenaron dos tinajas, la una totalmente – y era de buen tamaño y la otra le faltó poco para llenarse, y esto dejando los huesos, que en la cola solo tienen, como los espinazos de las vacas, pero redondos y chatos, más o menos de grandes, según su corpulencia. Pues si de la cola se sacó lo dicho, de lo demás ¿qué sería?

La composición de la cabeza es la más maravillosa. Ya dije que tiene uno como hocico, como la muñeca, redondo y muy calludo, que, quien no lo sabe, pensará que es lengua por estar en medio del labio de abajo, que parece sale de la boca, pero no es lengua sino hocico, y, para ozar la hierba que come le sirve (que de solo hierba se sustenta), y dentro del buche, o intestinos, no se halla otra cosa sino hierba monda, como en los de las vacas.

La lengua es la mitad más corta que la de las vacas, y que no la puede sacar fuera de la boca. Sólo podrá revolverla en ella para paladar la comida. Tiene muelas y dientes arriba y abajo; los dientes redondos del tamaño de un dedo, las muelas largas como tres dedos de ancho, poco más a menos, y uno de diámetro. Tiene dos colmillos, y estos no en el lugar que los demás animales sino debajo de la nariz, de modo que lo que es y parece nariz sirve de encaje para los dos colmillos.

Estos no se ven de fuera que sólo en los viejos ya parecen como los dientes amolados por el uso de mascar sino que están todos encajados en el hueco delantero, y que sirve de nariz, y es en tanto grado que aun los mismos indios que no saben el secreto, no hallaran los dichos colmillos, y aún con algunos españoles y Padres he hecho yo la experiencia, destrozada ya la cabeza, diciéndoles que buscasen los colmillos, y decían que no los tenían (y a mi me sucedió así la primera vez que los vi) hasta que delante de mi sacaron dos colmillos (estaban como dos dedos juntos), que tenía cada uno un palmo y tres dedos de largo; tan escondidos como esto están.

resembles the suet of the most plump and well fattened. The lard is not like that of a cow or pig, but heavier and joined to the hide and which portion is the fattest. Although it has its '*empellas*' inside, the natives do not distinguish it from other meat.

How many *arrobas* of flesh it would have is something that never crossed my mind for I had the opportunity in weighing it many times. I only relate what I have found on one of those animals and only with respect to the tail. It was cut up from its rear opening to the end for salting; when salted, it filled two earthen jars of a goodly size; one completely and the other to almost its very top. This was along with its bone which it has in its tail and similar to the backbone of a cow. If, then, from the tail we obtained that amount, how much more from the whole animal?

The composition of the head is the most interesting. I have already stated that it has a kind of snout like the wrist; round and very tough. Anyone who does not know better would think that it is the tongue because it is in the middle of the lower lip and seems to come out from the mouth. It is not a tongue but a snout and serves the animal for rooting up weeds that it eats; it sustains itself on seaweeds alone. In its stomach or intestines nothing else can be found except pure grass, as in those of the cows.

The tongue is shorter by half than that of cows and it cannot be extended outside the mouth. It can only be rolled around in the mouth in order to relish the food. It has molars and teeth above and below; the teeth are round in a shape of a finger and the large molars are three fingers wide, more or less, in diameter. It has two tusks and these are not in the same place as in other animals, but underneath the nose, so that what is and appears to be nose is a means of holding the two tusks.

These are not seen on the outside and only in the old ones do they appear as two sharpened teeth for the purpose of chewing. Rather, they are completely embedded in the front bone and which serves as a nose; so much so that even the natives themselves who do not know this secret would not find these tusks. Even among some of the Spaniards and Fathers, I have performed the experiment, with the skull already cracked open, asking them to look for the tusks. They replied that the animals did not have them; it happened to me also, the first time that I saw them until in my presence they drew out two tusks, which were like two fingers joined together. Each one was a *palmo* and three fingers in length and it shows how well they are hidden.

El casco de la cabeza es muy grueso; en los grandes tendrá un pulgar¹¹ de cancho; y al respeto, en los oídos tiene un huesecillo, como un diente pequeño, pero con dos agujeritos, que es el órgano del oído. Este está encajado en otro mayor, que es del tamaño de una castaña, por la parte superior redondo y por la inferior algo cóncavo, y en este lugar está el huesecillo dicho. Este hueso mayor, de puro duro es difícilísimo de lomear, porque se quiebra. Dicen que estos oídos, y más los pequeños, son los huesos de mayor virtud que tiene todo el *duyon* y por esto los estiman en más.

Los dichos colmillos, que imitan al marfil por lo sólido y lustroso y por lo medicinal (aunque en esto a todos los huesos tengo por iguales), son los más estimados. Los de las hembras son todos sólidos, cuando son ya viejas o han parido, sin tener nada hueco. Los de los machos son la mayor parte huecos, y así de menos útil. La superficie encima tiene una cortecilla, o cascarilla, pero durísima, y es necesario con un pedazo de acero quitarla para labrar al torno lo demás interior. Lo sólido lo es aún más que del marfil; la tez y resplandor no menos, el color no tan blanco, y tiene cada cuenta [?] una veta más cristalina que lo demás, y en algunos lo es tanto que casi es transparente. Los dientes son tan sólidos y duros como los colmillos, pero algo más blancos. Con el uso unos y otros toman un colorcillo entre amarillo y naranjado, muy bueno; y, si se traen inmediatamente a las carnes, casi colorado, que se le pega del sudor humano.

De los colmillos los dichos oídos son los más sólidos, aunque más duros; que, por tener la hebra muy intrincada, tienen más dificultad de labrarse, y no se bruñen y alisan tan bien como ellos. Suceden a estos los cascos de la cabeza que, aunque no tan duros como los colmillos, (y en esto no tan bruñidos), pero se allegan más que los otros huesos

Las costillas que están cerca del corazón, son las más cortas, más anchas y más sólidas, y casi tanto como el casco de la cabeza. Las demás, cuanto se van más apartando, son más largas y menos sólidas, y algunas de las últimas casi huecas, como las costillas de las vacas o caballos. Los huesos del espinazo y cola son los más blandos y porosos, y por esto incapaces de labrarse al lomo.

Vengamos a su virtud. Mucho he oído decir a muchos; no lo condeno todo ni tampoco lo apruebo todo. Tengo unas cosas por inventadas, otras por añadidas y otras por verdaderas. Diré lo que he experimentado, y, si la experiencia es la mejor maestra, a ella se puede atener con menos peligro.

The skeleton of the head is very thick; at its largest it is about a *pulgar*¹¹ in width. In respect to its ears, it has a little bone like a small tooth with two little holes and is the organ of hearing. This is embedded in another larger one which is the size of a chestnut; round on the top part and slightly concave at the bottom. This larger bone, due to its hardness, is very difficult to work at the wheel because it breaks. They say that these ears, and especially the small ones, are bones of the greatest medicinal value in the entire *duyung*; for this reason it is so highly esteemed.

These tusks, which resemble marble in their hardness and luster and by their medicinal [worth] — although in this matter I consider all bones to be equal — are the most esteemed. Those from the females are totally solid when they are old or have delivered and nowhere are they hollow. Those of the males are, for the most part, hollow and hence, less useful. The surface has over it a thin crust or husk but very tough. It is necessary to peel it off with some iron in order to fashion the inner portion on the wheel which is harder than marble. Its hue and luster is not lessened; the color is not as white. It has a vein, more crystal-like than the rest; in some, so much so that it is almost transparent. The teeth are as solid and tough as the tusks, but a bit whiter. With use some of them take on a slight coloring between yellow and very fine orange; if they are worn down to the flesh, almost red.

Next to these tusks, the bones of the ear are the most solid, but hardest. Since they have the weeds deeply enmeshed, there is more difficulty in fashioning them; they do not burnish or polish as well as the tusks. Next to this is the skull; although not as tough as the tusks (and for this reason not so easily polished), yet it comes closer to them than any other bones.

The ribs, which are nearest to the heart, are the shortest, the widest and most solid and comparable to the skull. The others, as they are set farther away, are longer and less solid while some of the last ones are almost hollow like the ribs of the cows or horses. The bones of the spine and the tail are the softest and most porous and consequently incapable of being worked on a wheel.

We come to its powers. I have heard much said by many persons; I do not condemn everything nor do I approve all of it. I hold some things to be fiction, others exaggerations and still others to be true. I shall relate what I have experienced and if experience is the best teacher, one can hold to it with less danger.

Lo que dicen que los colmillos de las hembras solas tienen virtud, es añadido, porque no la tienen menos los de los machos; antes juzgo que, si hay exceso, exceden estos, y hablo de experiencia como luego diré. Que las que son vírgenes aun excedan en ella, es invención, porque ¿quién ha visto virginidad en peces que son la misma lujuria? (que hija del mar la fingieron los antiguos). Además que cuando son tan pequeños que no son capaces de generación, tienen los colmillos, aun las mismas hembras, huecos y muy delgados, y sólo son sólidos cuanto ya grandes. Pues ¿en qué aposento están guardadas para que se conserven vírgenes? Y así, esto de las vírgenes es invención; de modo que, según mi sentir, todos generalmente, machos y hembras, chicos y grandes, tienen alguna virtud, y la que es como connatural a esta especie, sin diferencia ninguna; y pocos, sean machos o sean hembras, la tienen muy grande y eficaz, sino raros, y por alguna calidad especial, y esto sólo la experiencia lo puede sacar a luz; pero, por alguna exterior señal sacada de ella, se puede colegir cuales la tendrán, y esta puede ser la que se sigue.

Tomando, pues, una espada desnuda (y cuanto de mejor acero, mejor) y suspendiéndola mansamente encima de las dos yemas de los dos dedos, o índices o medios, de modo que el gavilán, o conchuela, que suelen tener, asiente en ellas, sin que la uña u otra cosa se le arrime, si se toma un colmillo, hueso o costilla de *duyong*, o las cuentas labradas de ellos, y, dándole vuelas cerca de la espada, sin llegar a ella, se meneen y hace impulso para dar la vuelta en seguimiento de las cuentas, o hueso, el que tiene la espada lo siente luego, y es señal que es de mayor virtud (experiencia es esta que he hecho varias veces, y sentido el impulso que a la vecindad del *duyon* da la espada en modo circular), y, si la espada no hace movimiento, no la tendrá tanta, aunque nunca le falla.

También, si cuando se abre una sangría, al mejor del brotan la sangre con toda su violencia parase, por llegar cerca del brazo un hueso, o otra cosa de *duyon* (que la suelen hacer parar, como yo he visto algunas veces, luego al instante), es señal de lo mismo. Y en esto no hay diferencia en que sea de macho o de hembra, colmillo o casco de la cabeza o costilla, porque en todos los huesos tienen la misma virtud, y tal vez algunas costillas (en especial las de cerca del corazón, que dijimos) suelen tener mayor virtud que los colmillos, y algunas de hembras más que las de

It is said that only the tusks of the females have [medicinal] powers, but one may add that those of the males do not have less of them. Instead, if there is an excess, I judge that it is the latter which has it. I speak from experience as I shall tell later. That those that are virgins exceed in powers is a fiction! Who has ever witnessed virginity in fish? They are affected with the same carnal desires and the ancients fancied it as the daughter of the sea. Besides when they are small, they are incapable of generation; still the females have tusks that are hollow and very thin and they only become hard when the creatures are grown. And hence, in what kind of enclosure are they guarded so that they may preserve their virginity? And so, this matter of virgins is fiction and to such a degree, in my opinion, that all in general, males, females, young and old have some medicinal powers which are innate in this species without any exception. Few, whether they are males or females, have it to a great degree and effectively, but in rare cases and through some special quality. Only experience can bring this to light, but by some external sign drawn from it one can infer which ones have it and this could be as follows.

One, then, takes a bared sword (the finer the iron, the better) and suspending it gently over the fleshy tips of the two fingers, either the forefingers or the middle ones, so that the hook or small shell which they have rests on them without anything else being near it. Then, if one takes a tusk or bone or rib of a *duyung* or some beads made from it and passing it around the sword without touching it, the latter moves from side to side or impelled to turn about, following the beads or bone. The one holding the sword senses it; this is a sign that the bone is of greater efficacy. This is an experiment that I have made various times and have felt the impulse that within the nearness of the *duyung* it pushes the sword in a circular fashion. If the sword does not have any movement, the bone does not have very great powers; however, it never lacks them completely.

Also, in the case of blood-letting: as the blood bursts out with all its violence, it may be stopped by bringing near the arm, a bone or other part of the *duyung* and it causes the bleeding to stop immediately as I have witnessed various times. It is an indication of the same thing. In this case it makes no difference whether it be from a male or female tusk or skull or rib, because in all the bones there is the same power. Perhaps, some ribs, especially those near the heart, as we said, have greater powers than the tusks. Some from the females more than

los machos, y, al contrario también, de que tengo hechas muchas experiencias, de las cuales he sacado lo dicho.

Es verdad que, por lo lustroso y sólido, son de más estima los rosarios de colmillos que los de los otros huesos, pero no por la virtud que, como he dicho, más está en alguna calidad más eficaz que, o por su naturaleza o por la cojuntura en que nació o murió porque (y juzgo que es esta la legítima causa) tuvo la tuna más propicia, o al nacer o al morir, y con mejor aspecto y mas propicio a la calidad y virtud que en ellos puso la naturaleza; que, si en las plantas vemos esto y en las maderas, y aún en las hojas medicinales que piden mucha sazón y conveniencia con la tuna, y en los cuerpos humanos y de animales se experimentan más o menos por la dependencia que todo viviente tiene de este astro, ¿quién duda que en su mayor o menor influjo (no en ser macho o hembra, colmillo o hueso) está lo más o menos eficaz de su virtud natural?

Las cosas para que son buenos los huesos del *duyon* indiferentemente, y en que muestran su eficacia, aprendido todo de la experiencia, son: para las reumas, sin que sea necesario poner las cuentas del *duyon* (como dicen algunos) en la parte contraria, que en la misma las he puesto yo siempre después que hice la prueba, y en ella he hallado más alivio, y es de modo que, si las cuentas son buenas, a poco rato que se ponen, se comienza a sentir el efecto, y, cuanto más se siente, mejor: pero no deja de haber oposición, tal vez en la causa de la reuma, porque a mi me ha sucedido con un mismo rosario quitárseme el dolor, y bien en breve algunas veces, y otras no, sino muy poco y despacio, o nada.

Es bueno contra flujos de sangre, aunque sea la menstrua de las mujeres, y algunas se traen siempre consigo o cuentas o sortijas de este pez. Se los impide con daño de su salud, aunque otras no sienten oposición al ordinario.

Yo tuve unas cuentecillas, que no llegaron a veinte, hechas de un colmillo que se halló un indio en una playa acaso, que, o se le cayó a otro, o de la resaca de la mar impelido, o del pez allí acaso varado se quedó, y fueron tan eficaces que ningunas de cuantas he tenido (que han sido muchas y de todo género) después, llegó, ni ha llegado, a su

those from males and vice-versa. I have made many experiments with all this and the above are a result of them.

It is true that for their shining quality and hardness, the rosaries from the tusks are more valued than those of the other bones, but not because of their powers. As I have stated: it is [all] more in the quality of the powers. Either due to its nature or by the conjunction in which the animal was born or died because (and I consider that this is the true reason) the moon was more propitious either at its birth or at death. Hence, more favorable and advantageous to its powers and quality which nature has endowed it with. Hence, we see this in plants, in wood, and even in medicinal leaves; many require the proper positioning and harmony with the moon. In the bodies of human beings and animals there is found by experience a greater or lesser abundance of humors and more or less marrow depending on the affinity which every living thing has from this luminous body of the heavens. Who can doubt that dependence upon the greater or lesser influence of the moon, whether the object is male or female, tusk or bone? Therein rests the greater or lesser efficacy of its natural power.

The things for which the bones of the *duyung* are good and in which they manifest their powers indifferently, all discovered through experience, are [the following]. In the case of rheumatism but where it is not necessary to place the beads of the *duyung* (as some say) on the opposite side. I have placed them on the same side; always after I made the test and I have found it to give greater relief. And so, if the beads are good, a little while after application, one begins to feel the effect; moreover, the longer it is done the better one feels. But it must not fail to be in opposition, perhaps on the occasion of the start of the rheumatism. For I have succeeded with a rosary of this type in stopping my pain; sometimes very quickly, and others but very slightly and very slowly or not at all.

It is good for the flow of blood and even in the case of menstruation of women; some of them always carry with them, either beads or finger rings from this fish. It protects them from the danger to their health although others do not ordinarily feel the opposition.

I had some little beads, scarcely twenty, made from the tusk which a native found by chance on the beach. It had either been dropped by another native or was washed up by the surf from the sea or had been left there from a fish which possibly had become stranded. They were so effective that none of the number which I had (which have been

virtud, pues, antes de doce horas que las llevase consigo cualquiera persona que padeciese dicho flujo, por copioso que fuese, se hallaba luego libre, sin otra mayor diligencia que aplicarlas a partes circunvecinas; y su mucha virtud fue causa que me quedase sin ellas porque, poco a poco se fueron quedando con ellas los que experimentaron sus efectos.

Son eficaces los polvos que, cuando se toman, se guardan, o las limaduras de todo género de huesos de este pez, para cámaras de sangre, bebidos al acostarse con un poco de agua caliente, sea por originadas de frío o de calor, porque por acá, aunque muchos achaques se originan de frío, en breves horas se mudan en calor por los muchos de esta tierra.

Para cámaras ordinarias son también buenos y hacen efecto, y para pujos, tomándolos en humo, o sahumero, en aquellas partes.

Para calenturas (y lo he probado no pocas veces, siempre con buen efecto, y con muchos de todas edades y sexos), tomando los dichos polvos, cuando se sienten los desperezos del frío, con un poco de vino; y, si dan sin frío, con agua caliente (cuando se siente que viene la calentura) y sahumándose todo el cuerpo con dichos polvos (que, mezclados con un poco de romero¹², huelen menos mal y hacen menos operación), y tapándose luego y arropándose bien, aunque se sienta calor (que la calentura, aunque cuando hay fuerza de humor es algo más recia, se acaba presto) y a dos o tres sahumeros no vuelve más.

Son también contra ponzoña, y así para mordeduras de cientopíes, y aún de culebras, aplicadas en la parte mordida y bebidos los polvos, son de mucho alivio, aunque, si el veneno es muy eficaz, no bastan a quitarlo, sí a dar lugar y espera, para que se hagan otros remedios y contras más eficaces.

Los mismos polvos, y mejor las cenizas de cualquiera hueso de este pez, fortalecen los dientes y muelas, y, enjugándose con ellas, puesto en vino, dan buen aliento y fortifican las encías. Para heridas recientes sirven de atajar la sangre, y vez ha sucedido haberse cortado acaso algún indio por acá alguna vena y no hallarse remedio para atajar la sangre que con estos polvos, o, atándose algún decenario, o cuentas, de este pez, se estanca y detiene al punto. La carne comida tiene los mismos efectos, sólo he oído decir que es poco provechosa a los bubosos y de otros males de dicha ley, que se debe estimar por especial virtud de este pez, opuesta al vicio sensual. Y esto baste del *duyon*.

numerous and of all kinds) came up to nor have matched their powers. Any person who might suffer from such a flow [of blood] however copious it might be, found himself freed within twelve hours without any other greater effort than having them close along. Their great efficacy was the cause of my being deprived of them since little by little they were kept by those who were experiencing its power.

The powders are effective and when ground, they retain the filings of every variety of the bone from this fish. It is good for a blood diarrhea when drunk with a little hot water upon going to bed whether the illness originates from cold or from heat. For over here, although many illnesses stem from cold, in a short while they turn to heat due to excessive heat of the land.

It is also good for the common diarrhea and is effective. And for tenesmus when applied with smoke or vapors to the affected areas.

They take these powders too for fevers (and I have tried them quite often, always with good results and with many of all ages and sexes) when they feel the oncoming cold, with a little wine. If they are not down with a cold, with hot water when one feels that the fever is coming on. They apply the vapors with these powders to the entire body; mixed with a little of *rosemary*¹² it does not have such a bad odor and makes the cure less difficult. Then, they cover themselves and dress completely even though they feel hot and with two or three applications of the vapors, it does not return. Even if there is some resistance to the humors when it is severe, it quickly subsides.

They are also good against poison and too for bites of centipedes and even snakes. Applied to the wound and having drunk the powders, there is great relief; if however, the venom is very strong, they will not be sufficient to prevent it. They are useful to gain time and delay so that more effectively remedies and antidotes can be applied.

These same powders and even better, the ashes of any bone from this fish strengthen the teeth and molars and when dried and placed in wine, they strengthen and fortify the gums. For recent wounds, they serve to stop the bleeding. With these powders or by apply a decade of such a rosary or beads from this fish, it slows it and stops it immediately. The flesh of the fish when eaten has the same effects. However, I have heard that it is hardly effective for the *buboes* and for diseases of this type. The powers of this fish must be highly regard as an antidote for the sensual drive. This is sufficient about the *duyung*.

Chapter 15

ANNOTATIONS

¹ *Bongansiso*. Also spelled as *bungansisu*: a whale; a baleen. *Bungansisuun ining dagat*. Sanchez [1711], *op. cit.*

“*Bungansisu*: A whale. One of the larger cetaceans and better-known; it grows to some forty *varas*. Its body is cylindrical and of a dark color and near its head it has two fins and still another in the lower part of its body. On its head it has two holes from which it spews water that it swallows at a great distance. The head and the mouth are very large and its body is filled with fat from which oil is derived. It lives in the sea but it comes to the beach where the female gives birth to the offspring where she nurtures it just like the four-legged creatures. On the sea near Catbalongan we can see now and then some small whales. De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 424, *Suppl.*

² “*Tandayag*: A large fish so-called; a large snake so-known and called.”

Sánchez, simply describes it as a whale and as a fish which releases or exudes amber or *Isda nga magbubuhay sin ambar*. *Ibid.* This word *tandayag* has been a matter of great discussion, controversy, deliberation and searching by a great number of historians, scholars writers, and cartographers, trying to determine where was this place, was it an island, connected to Leyte or Samar; whether a person, etc.

Artigas y Cuerva, in his *Reseña de la Provincia de Leyte*, gives a fine presentation of the many, various positions. He cites Judge Norberto Romualdez, in his “*Concurso de Etimologías*”, in *Noli me Tangere*, a monthly publication as holding to a position that this is a difficult word to trace. He does state that *tandayag* is a whale; while *bugansisu* means a cub, or a young whale. This is a fine scholarly posture. Come what may, we may state that it was a place, seemingly, where there were always found large numbers of these *tandayag*, be it near Leyte, Samar, or near some small island. *Op. cit.*, p. 4 & pp. 45-51.

³ *Dolog*. Unable to trace this word in any dictionary whatever combinations of *o*'s or *u*'s or *d*'s, *l*'s or *r*'s it took to find it. Due to the *o*'s and *u*'s which are used interchangeably in the Bisayan words, one must always search a word with the ‘*o*’ also under the letter ‘*u*’ to find it, and vice-versa. Likewise, the *d*, *l* and *r* are also variables and one must search for a word with a *d*, for example, under *l* and *r*; with an *l* also under *d* and *r*, etc. Otherwise, the word cannot be located in Sánchez's *Vocabulario* of 1711.

⁴ *Borongan*. A town found on the eastern coast of Samar or Ibabaw as it was known in ancient times. The name is derived from the root word, *burung*: fog, mist, vapor or steam. *Amuy burung an alupuup; bisan an atup sa balay magbuburungburung kun aga; Nagbuburuugburung na an durun. Naburungburungan buut an hunahuna. Borong nga tawu, luring, hungug. Burung*, means also to hide. *Magburung ka sin kanun, sa mga baka*, etc. Borongan is a town of Ibabaw. Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.* Today is the capital of Eastern Samar province.

⁵ *Sulat*. A town situated on the eastern coast of Samar or Ibabaw, between the towns of Taft (*formerly Tubig*) and San Julian (*Libas*) on the south.

The name of the town is perhaps, derived from *sulat*. *Madamuy sulat sinin salug ninyu: madamuy kapawangan*. *Nasulat*: To pass through a net or through the cane of the *salog*. *Nasulat an babuy sa batung, kun masiya sadtun mata*. *Sulat*. *Beling, taksip*, to try. *Sulatan mu kun hinug na, sulati an tinanuk kun lutu na*. *Sulat*: The opening in between a cane and another cane. *Masulat*: To see with sharpness. *Surat*, also: The fiber of *bahi*: *Dakuy sulat san pugahan*. Sánchez, *op. cit.*

⁶ *Gintagitan*. Unable, to locate this word.

⁷ *Tapa*. Also *tatapaan* or *tatapan*: *Isda kun babuu nga tarapan, tapa, tinapa, tinapan, magtapa*. "To roast like a barbecue". *Tapahan mu itun babuy, tapanan*. Sánchez [1711], *Ibid*. To cook by smoking, Tramp, *op. cit.*, p. 429.

"*Tapa*: Salted, lean flesh dried out, or under the sun or smoked. Cured meat. *Pagtapa*. v. To cure and salt the meats and smoke them. To place them in the open or in the sun so as to make them lean and preserve it. n." De la Rosa-Alcázar [1914], *op. cit.*, p. 344.

⁸ *Duyung*. A herbivorous marine mammal; a *dugung* of tropical coastal waters of the old world having flipperlike forelimbs and a deeply notched tail fin. This is a Malayan word. Cf. footnote in previous chapter.

⁹ *Pese mullier*. A *sirenian*: a herbivorous aquatic mammal of the order *Sirenia*, which includes the manatee and the *dugung*. It is the same as above but, as Alcina states, this is how the Portuguese call them.

¹⁰ *Bugsanga*. This word refers to the tail of a large fish. Sánchez [1711], *op. cit.*

¹¹ *Pulgar*. A Spanish word which means *thumb*. It is the size in width of a thumb.

¹² *Rosmarinus officinalis* or *rosmarine*, *rosemary*: an aromatic evergreen shrub of southern Europe, having light-blue flowers and grayish-green leaves that are used in cooking and perfume manufacture. Also referred to as 'sea-dew'.